

Suriname ^{SECRET}*file 010***Suriname-Cuba:
Expansion of Relations**

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Paramaribo is expanding its contacts with Havana. Army Commander Bouterse and Foreign Minister Naarendorp visited Cuba in May, and the two countries have signed several bilateral cooperation agreements. Havana has been seeking to broaden its relations with Suriname since the sergeants' coup in February 1980 that eventually brought Bouterse to power. Suriname's leaders at first were wary of Havana's intentions and preferred to keep the Cubans at arms' length. Bouterse has been the primary proponent in the leadership of relaxing Suriname's cautious treatment of the Cubans. Motivated by a desire to legitimize his seizure of power and lured by the appeal of regional recognition as a revolutionary leader, Bouterse is opening the way for increased Cuban influence

Bouterse's clandestine trip to Havana—probably arranged by Naarendorp on a previous visit to Havana in May—took place while he was ostensibly on vacation in Grenada. According to a generally reliable source, Bouterse indicated that he went there to check on the progress of four Surinamese military personnel training in Cuba, but he also requested material assistance and received a small amount of Cuban arms.

Shortly after Bouterse returned home, Naarendorp went back to Havana for a nonaligned movement meeting and, according to a Cuban news agency, signed economic, scientific, and technical bilateral cooperation agreements. Naarendorp reportedly met with President Castro during one of his visits. Castro advised Naarendorp to keep the Cuban presence in Suriname discreet to avoid "having problems" with the United States. In addition, two Surinamese delegations—public health officials and journalists—went to Cuba during this period to attend seminars, and

Cuban diplomatic officials made an unpublicized visit to Paramaribo reportedly to discuss measures to improve Bouterse's personal security arrangements

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25X1**Surinamese Motivation and Decisionmaking**

Bouterse and Naarendorp, by expanding ties with Cuba, appear willing to risk their golden handshake with the Netherlands. When the Dutch granted independence to their colony in 1975, they left it with a 15-year, \$1.5 billion development aid package. Bilateral meetings on the development aid were suspended after the dismissal of the Chin A Sen government in February 1982 and remain indefinitely postponed. In addition, The Hague recently has warned that it will undertake a comprehensive review of relations with Paramaribo and will not tolerate an expansion of ties with Havana. The Dutch, however, have a reputation of "talking tough" to Suriname and are unlikely to follow through soon with any decisive action. Bouterse and Naarendorp, who probably are well aware of this tendency, listened serenely to the demarche and appeared undisturbed by the Dutch threats. If a center-right government takes office in Holland after the general election in September, however, The Hague might be more willing to cut aid if Bouterse continues to move toward Cuba

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Cuba could not begin to match the economic assistance that the Dutch provide, but Suriname's leaders, like many of their Caribbean counterparts, are attracted to the Cuban model for a number of reasons. They see that Cuba has made impressive strides in overcoming many of the same development problems they encounter in such areas as agriculture, health, sanitation, and education. They are struck by the apparent discipline of the Cuban population and the ability of the Castro regime to mobilize large numbers of people in support of a specific objective. As leaders of a former colony, Suriname's strongmen identify

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with Cuban rhetoric against "neocolonial" domination. Moreover, Bouterse is easily awed by the trappings of revolutionary leadership and impressed with the comradely treatment the Cubans give him. []

Bouterse and, to a lesser extent, Naarendorp are the chief architects of Suriname's Cuba policy. Their latitude in forming this policy seems to have grown since the ouster of the Chin A Sen government. The civilian government apparently has some influence over decisions affecting economic development and policies—probably because Bouterse lacks experience in this field. Foreign Ministry officials, however, have expressed surprise over the extent of the agreements reached by Naarendorp during his recent trip to Havana. []

Deputy Army Commander Roy Horb—Bouterse's alter ego in the left-leaning armed forces clique known as the Military Authority—apparently was not informed about his superior's trip to Cuba and recently indicated he does not share Bouterse's revolutionary penchant. According to a source of undetermined reliability, Horb plans to gather evidence at public hearings of disapproval of Bouterse's policies and present his findings to the Surinamese leader. []

Bouterse's pursuit of closer ties with Havana stems primarily from his insecure domestic political position; his several attempts to locate a legitimate political power base so far have been unsuccessful. He first sought to follow a moderate course, eschewing leftists and appealing to the conservative population, primarily through his anticorruption campaign. Failing to inspire a following with this approach, he tried to solicit support from the old political parties. When he encountered little enthusiasm in those sectors, he reversed his tactics. Bouterse forgave his leftist comrades and proclaimed socialism as Suriname's guiding principle, but mass support again failed to materialize. Bouterse's latest effort, the establishment of a state political party called the Anti-Imperialist Revolutionary Front, has sought—so far unsuccessfully—to encompass already existing mass groups. The final

blow to Bouterse's efforts was an abortive coup in March 1982, originating within Bouterse's only real constituency—the military. []

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The Surinamese strongman now seems to be seeking legitimacy from external sources. His primary goal is to gain prestige by identifying and associating with other revolutionary leaders—Castro and Bishop—and revolutionary causes—El Salvador and Nicaragua. According to a source who was aware his information would reach the US Government, Bouterse wants to be a revolutionary socialist leader in the eastern Caribbean. He seems to believe that building a regional following will enhance his reputation at home. []

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Bouterse's secondary objective, as suggested by the request for Cuban assistance and security training for his bodyguards, is to remain in power through force. In addition to the security training, Bouterse's newly formed People's Militia appears to be modeled after the Cuban version. The group, composed of loyal supporters, probably will act as both a Praetorian Guard and secret intelligence network. []

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Naarendorp, who may have political ambitions of his own, does not want Cuban influence in local politics, although he reportedly favors extending Suriname's ties to Cuba. He may be seeking to limit Havana's contacts with other malleable Surinamers, believing that exclusive links with Havana will eventually help him rival Bouterse for power. []

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Prospects Over the Longer Term

Bouterse's need to consolidate his power and his infatuation with the revolutionary image suggests he is likely to keep Suriname on its steady drift leftward. Cuban assistance and advice, which appears less conditional and more timely than those from the Dutch, will probably encourage the trend to the left. Given the lack of any overt opposition forces in Suriname, Bouterse probably will continue to espouse socialist rhetoric, support revolutionary causes, and accept leftist advice. []

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Even so, Bouterse's efforts to move the nation along a revolutionary path will not be as bold as his rhetoric. His appointment of a moderate government to replace Chin A Sen's administration and the clandestine nature of his trip to Cuba indicate he recognizes the absence of support for socialism in Suriname. Moreover, a generally reliable source reports that he is ambivalent toward Cuban military assistance—accepting Cuban training for his bodyguards but fearful that overt Cuban military aid would arouse negative domestic reactions. If Bouterse follows Bishop's example in Grenada, he will not threaten the vital interests of the private sector or the Netherlands, especially if The Hague does begin to implement threatened sanctions. [REDACTED]

Over the longer term, Bouterse is likely gradually to restrict domestic liberties. Press freedom already has been limited somewhat by government censorship and several seizures of printing presses. Prospects for meaningful elections are dim, as is the future for a new constitution. Moreover, the recently established People's Militia probably will be expanded as a force to intimidate would-be opponents. Bouterse will maintain the facade of civilian government for as long as he can, resorting to rule by decree when necessary. [REDACTED]

Bouterse may be derailed in his efforts to extend his control if the major labor unions—the only genuine source of mass action—decide to oppose him actively or if his support in the military deteriorates further. Thus far, however, only one of the major union leaders has publicly expressed his concern for the course of events in Suriname and public apathy has thwarted active labor opposition. The military—especially minority Hindustanis in the lower ranks—could pose a threat. The troops are disgruntled over Bouterse's involvement in politics and his discrimination against non-creoles in awarding promotions. Many weapons reportedly were not recovered after the coup attempt last March and could be used by the malcontents against Bouterse. [REDACTED]

The Cubans, for their part, realize that Bouterse lacks authentic ideological credentials and will support him as long as he serves their interests. They probably will try to expand their influence and to push the government further to the left, both directly, through political and economic pressure, and indirectly, through contacts in local unions, student, or other groups. The Cubans will remain flexible in their relationship with Bouterse and will not hesitate to shift their support if another political figure of greater promise surfaces. Recognizing the fluid nature of the political scene in Paramaribo, they will avoid any major commitment until their relationship has a much firmer ideological basis. [REDACTED]

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Chronology of Surinamese-Cuban Relations []

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<i>May 1979</i>	Government of Henck Arron establishes diplomatic relations with Havana []	25X1
<i>February 1980</i>	Sergeants' coup. Cuba quickly offers aid and advice but is rebuffed by Surinamese Government. []	25X1
<i>August 1980</i>	Army Commander Daysi Bouterse emerges as strongman in government shakeup. He accuses Havana of encouraging a leftist coup. [] Cuban delegation is refused entry into Suriname. []	25X1
<i>December 1980</i>	Surinamese delegation attends Cuba's Second Communist Party Congress. []	25X1
<i>February 1981</i>	Cuban cultural delegation attends first anniversary celebration of the sergeants' coup. []	25X1
<i>March 1981</i>	Pro-Cuban sergeants imprisoned after August 1980 shakeup are released and reinstated in the military. []	25X1
<i>May 1981</i>	Cuban Ambassador in Guyana accredited to Suriname. []	25X1
<i>June 1981</i>	Havana establishes an official mission in Paramaribo—a step contrasting with the general cutbacks at Cuban diplomatic missions elsewhere. [] Films of the Cuban health and educational systems aired on Surinamese television receive public praise from Bouterse. []	25X1
<i>July 1981</i>	Cuban trade mission visits Paramaribo; agreement is struck for Cuban purchase of cement and Surinamese purchase of sugar. Cuban commercial treaty presented at that time is considered inappropriate to Suriname's needs. []	25X1
<i>August 1981</i>	Suriname denies entry to a Cuban cultural group on protocol grounds []	25X1
<i>September 1981</i>	Bouterse reportedly decides to send several military and civilian government members to Cuba for political training [] Six students reportedly are scheduled to study in Cuba on scholarships. [] According to clandestine sources, Bouterse decides to demonstrate Suriname's responsiveness to Cuban offers by accepting an invitation to visit Havana at a future date. []	25X1

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<i>October-November 1981</i>	Suriname designates a nonresident ambassador to Havana. []	25X1
	Full diplomatic status is granted to Cuba's mission in Paramaribo. []	25X1
	Cuban pharmaceutical officials visit Paramaribo to discuss the expansion of that industry in Suriname. []	25X1
<i>November 1981</i>	Cuban Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Ricardo Alarcon Quesada visits Suriname and is unsuccessful in obtaining Surinamese agreement to the Commercial Treaty and support for a Cuban-sponsored UN resolution condemning US military exercises in the Caribbean. []	25X1
<i>December 1981</i>	Cuban Charge d'Affaires Pedro Silvio Gonzalez, an official of Cuba's America Department, presents his credentials to Foreign Minister Harvey Naarendorp. []	25X1
	A two-man Cuban delegation attends the proclamation of Bouterse's Anti-Imperialist Revolutionary Front. []	25X1
	Paramaribo promises an official visit by Naarendorp in 1982 to sign the Commercial Treaty and the establishment of a resident diplomatic office in Havana. []	25X1
<i>January 1982</i>	Cuba reportedly submits a draft economic aid agreement, but Surinamese officials defer acting on it. []	25X1
<i>March 1982</i>	A Cuban sports delegation visits Suriname. []	25X1
	Attempted coup against Bouterse fails. Cuban Charge in Paramaribo reportedly has indirect contact with Bouterse during the attempt, but no evidence suggests that Havana was involved in the incident. []	25X1
<i>April 1982</i>	Surinamese public health officials travel to Cuba for a one-month orientation tour of Cuba's public health facilities. []	25X1
<i>May 1982</i>	Foreign Minister Naarendorp reportedly goes to Havana after laying the groundwork for Bouterse's planned trip to Grenada. []	25X1
	Bouterse reportedly requests military assistance from Havana, possibly during a reported clandestine trip to Cuba on 8 and 9 May, while ostensibly on vacation in Grenada. []	25X1
	[] a small shipment of Cuban arms transits Grenada, with Prime Minister Bishop's concurrence, and is transported to Suriname aboard Bouterse's return flight on 15 May []	25X1

A delegation of Surinamese journalists goes to Havana to participate in a seminar of Latin American journalists. [REDACTED]

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Naarendorp returns to Havana for a meeting of the nonaligned movement. While there, he signs three agreements for bilateral cooperation—economic, scientific, and technical—between Suriname and Cuba. [REDACTED]

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June 1982

[REDACTED] a five-man Cuban delegation headed by Osvaldo Cardenas, Chief of the Caribbean desk in Havana's America Department, paid an unpublicized visit to Suriname on 18 June. They discussed steps to improve Bouterse's personal security and arranged for several more body guards to be trained in Cuba. [REDACTED]

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